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LIFTING THE VEIL BETWEEN GEORGE ELIOT'S "THE LIFTED VEIL" AND HENRY JAMES'  
"THE BEAST IN THE JUNGLE"

by

DAN ABITZ

Under the Direction of Dr. Janet Gabler-Hover

ABSTRACT

This thesis works towards establishing a legacy of influence between George Eliot's "The Lifted Veil" and Henry James' "The Beast in the Jungle." Through an exploration of James' relationship to Eliot's *oeuvre* and a close study of the two works in tandem, it will become apparent the influence Eliot's slight Gothic story held on James' celebrated short story. Furthermore, this thesis will introduce another chapter of the growing critical tradition of studying the relationship between George Eliot and Henry James.

INDEX WORDS: George Eliot, Henry James, Lifted Veil, Beast in the Jungle, Art of Fiction, Victorian, Gothic, Short story, Novella, The Better Sort

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"THE BEAST IN THE JUNGLE"

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DAN ABITZ

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Art

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2013

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Georgia State University

December 2013

## **DEDICATION**

This is for you, mom

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I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to Dr. Janet Gabler-Hover for her tireless support of and efforts in guiding my research; Dr. Audrey Goodman for reviewing my thesis and first introducing me to “The Beast in the Jungle”; and Dr. Paul Schmidt for reviewing and editing my thesis. Without these three scholars, I would not be the student I am today.

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## INTRODUCTION

As a voluminous and diligent literary critic, Henry James perhaps understood and anticipated the effect his elusive and enigmatic Preface to the seventeenth volume of *The New York Edition of Henry James* would have upon future critics. By looking back to the original motives for writing the stories included in this volume in a deliberately slippery fashion, James all too enticingly veils the originary moment for “The Altar of the Dead.” That moment – the physical manifestation of the composition’s central idea – remains impregnable and fixed outside the grasp of “an organized search” (v). In discussing this original conceit of “The Altar of the Dead,” James writes, “It was ‘there’ – it had always, or from ever so far back, been there” (v). Both alluringly and frustratingly, James acknowledges both the story’s extant origin and its inaccessibility.

James approaches “The Beast in the Jungle” similarly. Originally published as part of *The Better Sort* collection in 1903, “The Beast in the Jungle” reappears here a mere six years later as the logical companion to “The Altar of the Dead.” James’ comments on the origins of “The Beast in the Jungle” are, like his comments on “The Altar of the Dead,” playful and oblique. He wryly laments, “As to the accidental determinant of which composition, once more... I remount the stream of time, all enquiringly, but to come back empty-handed” (ix). When looking back at the inception of “The Beast in the Jungle,” instead of finding the germinating seed of “the subject of this elaborated fantasy,” James simply meets it “as a recorded conceit and an accomplished fact” (ix). “The Beast in the Jungle,” though admittedly borne from an impression (or image or idea), reveals only its existence and not its origins. On one hand, James seems to want to dismiss the concept of a palpable, dissectible origin. On the other, he invites an endless procession of critical inquiry into the story’s inception.

James reveals the veil while coyly denying what it hides. I propose that the most complete answer to James' enigmatic rambling in his preface – is a short story written by an author James once called “magnificently ugly – deliciously hideous” in 1869: “The Lifted Veil” by George Eliot (*Henry James Letters I*, 116).<sup>1</sup>

Critics, of course, have suggested other critical sources for “The Beast in the Jungle.” Though James immediately turns away from the lost origins of “The Beast in the Jungle” to provide a synopsis of the story and a brief survey of its moral purport, he cannot completely dispense with critical curiosity concerning the story's genesis. Indeed, even if James *meant* to expel any and all inquiry, the vast amount of critical attention paid to the genesis of “The Beast in the Jungle” effectively renders such an imperative insubstantial. Since James was, in fact, so engaged with literature as a critic, many scholars look into the literary influences on “The Beast in the Jungle.” As early as 1953, Jessie Ryon Lucke looks to an author with whose work James interacted at great length. In his aptly titled “The Inception of ‘The Beast in the Jungle,’” Lucke critically looked into the parallels between James' story and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance*, specifically in the personalities of Marcher and Hollingsworth and their respective relationships to May and Zenobia.<sup>2</sup> Lucke believes that these parallels, and certain passages from James' New York Edition prefaces and notebooks, reveal “an apparent debt to Hawthorne” and disclose “an idiosyncrasy of James' later method, his mania for revision” (532). Though I agree with Lucke that James was driven to revise or re-adapt the works of his predecessors, I believe more evidence exists for James using “The Lifted Veil” as his primary source material for “The Beast in the

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<sup>1</sup> James continues, “Now in this vast ugliness resides a most powerful beauty, which, in a very few minutes, steals forth and charms the mind, so that you end as I ended, in failing in love with her” (116).

<sup>2</sup> Lucke writes, “The egotistical men in both *The Blithedale Romance* and “The Beast in the Jungle” are responsible for the deaths of Zenobia and May Bartram” (531).

Jungle” than *The Blithedale Romance*. Importantly, Lucke’s article provides a valuable blueprint for other studies of influence on “The Beast in the Jungle.” Other critics, such as Fike (1989), Macksey (2003), and Peterson (1982) explore, respectively, the influence of the *Aeneid*, Alfred de Musset’s *On ne badine pas avec l’amour*, and Benjamin Constant’s *Adolphe*.<sup>3</sup>

Other scholars have sought biographical or psychological source for “The Beast in the Jungle.” Paul Lindholdt straddles the line between biographical and literary influence in his essay “Pragmatism and ‘The Beast in the Jungle,’” placing James’ story at the crossroads of the death of his young cousin Minny Temple and the influence of his older brother William James’ *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. William Nance combines literature and psychology, as he discusses both the narrative parallels of between “The Beast in the Jungle” and Sophocles’ tragedies and a Freudian dissection of Marcher (and, subtly, James himself). Rayburn Moore, in his 1976 article “The Strange Irregular Rhythm of Life: James’ Late Tales and Constance Woolfson,” eschews literary influence altogether in favour of drawing multiple parallels between John Marcher and May Bartram’s relationship and Henry James’ relationship with Constance Woolson.<sup>4</sup> Moore’s article, however, essentially exists within the same wheelhouse – one of anecdotal and evidenced parallelism between the story’s characters and narrative and outside influences.

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<sup>3</sup> Fike’s argument solely hinges James’ choice to include Pompeii as the initial meeting place of John Marcher and May Bartram. Macksey, though working within a deeper critical history of James’ relationship with de Musset, spends far more time discussing the occasion by which James created “The Beast in the Jungle” than effectively exploring the de Musset’s direct influence on the story. Peterson’s argument cleverly brings “The Beast in the Jungle” into conversation with the “quite dissimilar” *Adolphe* through an examination of M. H. Abram’s notion of the “archetypal quest of the Romantic hero” (224).

<sup>4</sup> Moore’s article enters into a short critical history of comparing these relationships initiated by Leon Edel in 1962.

What becomes apparent in this brief overview of criticism concerned with literary (and some biographical/psychological) influence is that, besides Macksey's relative recent publication, almost all of this tradition takes place before Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick published her watershed essay "The Beast in the Closet" in 1990.<sup>5</sup> Sedgwick's essay sparked a critical renaissance in queer readings of "The Beast in the Jungle" in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, most notably led by Leo Bersani and Kevin Ohi. These critics re-imagined the possibilities of the social and personal *influences* of "The Beast in the Jungle" and the social implications of the story.<sup>6</sup> Other critics such as Omri Moses, Carolyn Tate, Matthew Helmers, and Matthew Lundblad have, in the last four years, explored the new possibilities of reading and studying "The Beast in the Jungle" in Sedgwick's tradition.<sup>7</sup> This recent critical tradition looks at both the coded homosocial world of the *fin-de-siecle* time in which James wrote "The Beast in the Jungle," and also the ambiguous, coded world *within* the story.

The source that I suggest, George Eliot's "The Lifted Veil," her first and only Gothic novella, features a young man named Latimer afflicted with clairvoyance (and angina pectoris) and Bertha, the woman he disastrously takes as his wife. Latimer's previsionary abilities alienate him from the rest of the world, including his wife, and ultimately allow him to foresee his own death. Eliot dismissively offered "The Lifted Veil" to her publishers as "not a *jeu d'esprit*, but a *jeu de melancolie*" of which she thought little to nothing (*Letters III*, 41).

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<sup>5</sup> As first appeared in *Epistemology of the Closet*, UC Press (1990). This work, along with the works following in Sedgwick's critical footsteps, will become more important in later sections of this thesis. For now, a brief survey of important publications following Sedgwick will suffice.

<sup>6</sup> Leo Bersani's chapter "The It and the I" from *Influences* directly influenced - along with Sedgwick's essay - Ohi's "The Beast's Storied End" (2012). Ohi's *Henry James and the Queerness of Style*, published in the same year, will become useful during my exploration between the relationship of Eliot's and James' theories on the novel.

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps most interesting, Tate (2012) shifts the critical focus onto May Bartram and her possible queerness. Tate, in this way, enters into a critical tradition of destabilizing Marcher as the story's main protagonist and replacing him with May Bartram as explored by Eugene Goodheart (2003) and Janice Harris (1981).

In the same letter to John Blackwood, Eliot readily admits that the only impetus to submit the story came from her private critic (George Henry Lewes) finding the story “very striking and original” (41). Blackwood, like most critics of the story, responded both positively and negatively, admiring Eliot’s masterful prose and style while despising the story’s climactic revivification scene. Thus, “The Lifted Veil” entered into publication anonymously and remained so until its republication in 1878 as an accompanying piece to Eliot’s *Silas Marner*. Identifying herself as the author of the story did little to sway critics, however, and “The Lifted Veil” remained in literary and critical purgatory for well over one hundred years.

In fact, even Henry James’ relatively positive review of “The Lifted Veil” published in *Nation* in 1878 did little to sway the reading public in favour of the story.<sup>8</sup> The critical renaissance “The Beast in the Jungle” enjoyed after Sedgwick’s “The Beast in the Closet” did not begin for “The Lifted Veil” until Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s landmark chapter “Made Keen by Loss: George Eliot’s Veiled Vision” which appeared in their indelible *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. Published in 1979, this chapter ventured to critically rescue “The Lifted Veil” from the literary trenches and put it alongside the rest of Eliot’s *oeuvre* and the works of Austen, the Bronte sisters, and Emily Dickinson.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> James, as will be discussed, reviewed all of Eliot’s literature, sometimes even reviewing certain novels more than once. This intense critical engagement will become a primary and motivating facet of this thesis later.

<sup>9</sup> Two articles do, in fact, pre-date Gilbert and Gubar. Elliot Rubinstein (1962) and Carol Christ (1976) performed the *initial* recovery work of “The Lifted Veil.” Rubinstein’s article is recovery work in its strictest sense, opting to essentially explore the story for the first time in a critical light. Interestingly, he finds a brief parallel between Latimer’s fate and the fate of T.S. Eliot’s “The Hollow Men” (183). Christ uses “The Lifted Veil” to “[suggest] a motivation both for Eliot’s stress in the rest of her fiction upon charity and for her use of providential death” (139).

*The Madwoman in the Attic* became the launching pad for a wealth of criticism concerning “The Lifted Veil” in the 1980s. Gray (1982), McKenzie (1984), and Carroll Viera (1984) all present unique views on “The Lifted Veil” scholarship and influenced new strains of criticism.<sup>10</sup> Gray, in examining the influence of Eliot’s knowledge of Victorian pseudosciences on “The Lifted Veil” led to works by Flint (1997), Galvan (2005), Albrecht (2006), and Johnson (2007) that all explore the scientific, pseudoscientific, and technological influences on “The Lifted Veil.” Though brief, McKenzie’s “George Eliot’s Nightmare, Proust’s Realism” essentially attempts to accomplish a similar goal as this thesis: to prove “The Lifted Veil” – though a ‘slight’ story – influenced great works. Vierra, in treating “The Lifted Veil” as the embodiment of Eliot’s anxiety over her artistic and critical theories, welcomes Martin Willis’ (2005) argument that “The Lifted Veil” represents Eliot’s personal and professional anxieties in the wake of Joseph Liggins’ allegations that he was the author behind the pseudonym “George Eliot.”

Even though this critical renaissance surrounding “The Lifted Veil” resembles (at least in emergent critical possibilities and sheer volume) the recent resurgence of criticism surrounding “The Beast in the Jungle,” the two stories emerged under contrasting circumstances (“The Beast in the Jungle” as a celebrated success and “The Lifted Veil” as an anomaly) and have maintained divergent paths. There remains, however, an unexplored and tangible link between the two stories. In “The Beast in the Jungle,” James uses specific phrasing that, at first, appears arguably coincidental, but that solidifies itself and takes shape within the reader’s mind as *important* upon its second use: “The rest of the world of course thought him queer,” remarks the narrator after Marcher and May reestablish their

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relationship, “but she, she only knew how, and above all why, queer; which was precisely what enabled her to *dispose the concealing veil* in the right folds” (250, emphasis mine). Later, after May’s death, the narrator relates that Marcher could not conceive of “*lifting the veil* from his image” because to do so “would have been... to hear himself” tell a goodwife’s tale (274, emphasis mine). Similarly, in a brief return to James’ Preface, James describes Marcher as a man “condemned to keep counting with the unreasoned *prevision* of some extraordinary fate” and as possessing a singular desire “to meet his fate, or at least to *divine* it” (ix, x, emphasis mine).

Of course, the connection of James’ use of the veil metaphor to the title (and action) of Eliot’s “The Lifted Veil,” and the connection between Marcher’s desire for previsionary abilities and Latimer’s actual previsionary abilities has the appearance of simple over-readings of coincidences.<sup>11</sup> These connections, however, offer the key to unlocking the gateway between the two stories. Specifically, I am interested in how Eliot and James both create gothic stories that lack clear concepts of time and space (thus working with ambiguities that destabilize normative narration); how the relationships between Latimer/Bertha and Marcher/May converge and diverge at numerous critical junctures; how Marcher’s blindness mocks Latimer’s clairvoyance and how May’s (supposed) prescience mimics that of Bertha’s; and how the difficult conclusions and climaxes of the two stories mirror each other and how they influence the effectiveness of the proposed moral sentiment of each tale. Because of these relationships between the two texts, I believe George Eliot’s “The Lifted Veil” is the primary literary influence on Henry James’ “The Beast in the Jungle.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> It should also be noted that the metaphor of the veil is not unique to just these two stories.

<sup>12</sup> The issues presented above essentially couch themselves in the larger question of how Eliot and James both manipulate conventions of gothic literature to explore social and personal anxieties. Essentially, I am asking

Further, I believe the evidence for this literary influence extends beyond just the parallel formal conventions of “The Lifted Veil” and “The Beast in the Jungle” to the critical relationship between George Eliot and Henry James as artists. That is, James’ dense critical engagement with Eliot’s work provides an indelible foundation for this thesis.

Other critics, too, have noticed the amount of attention James paid to Eliot and have developed their own arguments connecting works by the two authors. In one of the earliest instances of critics putting Eliot’s work and James’ work into conversation, Q.D. Leavis briefly measures the relationship between passages from Dickens’ *Little Dorritt*, Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, and James’ *Portrait of a Lady* and the indebtedness present within Eliot’s and James’ respective works.<sup>13</sup> Though Leavis applauds Eliot for successfully re-imagining a passage from Dickens’ *Little Dorritt*, she claims James’ *Portrait of a Lady* is of “parasitic” indebtedness to both Eliot and Dickens (428). Leavis feels *Portrait of a Lady* demonstrates, in its indebtedness, “dilution, sentimentalisation or vulgarization of the original” and “a lack of unity and drive” (427). Though a starkly unflattering – and perhaps unfair – portrayal of James’ ‘indebtedness’ to Eliot (and subsequently Dickens), some of Leavis’ sentiments find themselves echoed in more contemporary articles.

Sarah Daugherty (1989), working with *Portrait of a Lady* as Leavis did, puts James’ novel into conversation with Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda*. Daugherty’s article demonstrates *Daniel Deronda*’s influence upon this novel. Daugherty argues that Grandcourt prefigures Osmond as much as Gwendolen Harleth prefigures Isabel Archer. Further, Daugherty notes

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and answering the question of how James’ “The Beast in the Jungle,” mimics, echoes, or re-interprets the way Eliot manipulates the gothic genre in “The Lifted Veil.”

<sup>13</sup> For Leavis, “indebtedness” measures “how a great writer constructively uses, by extending and deepening, an invention of” another artist, and how the artist’s inspiration and execution “[carries] the stamp of the integrity of the truly creative” (427).



the similarly odd and painful marriage plots of the two novels. Daugherty estimates that James “subordinated ‘the deeper psychology’” of Gwendolen and Grandcourts’ marriage plot for the “dramatic effect” of the unspoken, more irrational marriage of Isabel to Osmond (160).<sup>14</sup> For Daugherty the ambiguity following Isabel’s marriage to Osmond marks James’ attempt to re-think conventional Victorian marriage plots (as found in *Daniel Deronda*). James, by worrying too much about the novel’s form, has “failed to imagine the misery that her return to Osmond might bring” Isabel (164).

Staying within the critical tradition of evaluating the relationship between Eliot’s work and James’ work, two critics alone have tied Eliot’s “The Lifted Veil” directly to Henry James. Richard Freadman, in his book *Eliot, James and the Fictional Self*,<sup>15</sup> discusses “The Lifted Veil” at length but never puts it directly into conversation with one of James’ novels or stories. Though appearing in the chapter that compares and contrasts *Middlemarch* and *The Golden Bowl*, “The Lifted Veil” remains strictly as a roadmap for reading *Middlemarch* and never as explicitly related to *The Golden Bowl*.<sup>16</sup> Griem (2008) comes closest to the purview of this thesis, tracing a discussion of nineteenth-century visuality and its metaphors from Poe’s “The Purloined Letter” to Eliot’s “The Lifted Veil” to James’ “The Figure in the Carpet.” Though an adept and insightful look into the relatedness between Eliot’s “The

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<sup>14</sup> Daugherty privileges *feminist* potentialities over formal progression. Johnson (1997) and Griem (2008) take up these feminist potentialities in James as related to Eliot but come to different conclusions. Johnson implicitly agrees with Daugherty, arguing that *Middlemarch* “struggles to free Dorothea from an exclusive male gaze” while *Portrait of a Lady* too much “[confesses] its narrative viewpoint with the monolithic gaze of the male” (2). Griem comes to a different conclusion, finding that James’ “The Figure in the Carpet,” “The Tale of the Screw,” and “In the Cage” deal with the gendered politics of nineteenth-century visuality in a more complex fashion than Eliot’s “The Lifted Veil” that results in a more potentially feminist reading.

<sup>15</sup> Shruti Sharma published a book-length study of Eliot and James in 1986, as well, titled *Lions in the Path: A Study of George Eliot and Henry James as Theorists of Fiction*. Sharma examines the theories and art of Eliot and James separately before briefly intertwining the two in the concluding chapter.

<sup>16</sup> Freadman’s book is the longest and most thorough study of Eliot and James’ relationship. “In the Cage” is the only short story of James’ that Freadman discusses, but due to James’ massive literary output, it is simply unreasonable to expect Freadman to cover *all* of James’ (or Eliot’s) works. The breadth of Freadman’s study, however, should not be overlooked.

Lifted Veil” and James’ “The Figure in the Carpet,” Griem eschews any explicit argument of literary influence. There remains, then, the opportunity to argue the influential factor of Eliot’s “The Lifted Veil” on James’ “The Beast in the Jungle.” Though - as I have just recently demonstrated - “The Lifted Veil” is not foreign to scholarship considering Eliot and James’ relationship, there still remains a critical void to fill.

To effectively fill this void (arguing the influence held upon “The Beast in the Jungle” by “The Lifted Veil”), I will divide my thesis into three chapters. Chapter One will examine James’ relationship to Eliot’s work with important passages from his numerous reviews of her works. By demonstrating that James’ engagement with Eliot’s *oeuvre* is as expansive as it is pendulous - as filled with praise as it is contentious - I will reveal a nascent desire in James to succeed where he feels Eliot failed.<sup>17</sup> Thus, “The Lifted Veil” is not only the primary influence on “The Beast in the Jungle” but is a blueprint he hopes to update or re-adapt for *his* needs. Following this, Chapter Two will survey the artistic and aesthetic philosophies of the two authors. Specifically, I will measure James’ “The Art of Fiction” against Eliot’s philosophy. Eliot’s philosophy extends back to her earliest publication “Poetry and Prose, From the Notebook of an Eccentric” and stays relatively stable through more famous publications such as “The Progress of the Intellect,” “The Morality of Wilhelm Meister,” “The Natural History of German Life,” and “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists.” This section will note the important similarities and differences between the theories of Eliot and James. Chapter Three of my thesis will turn to the prevalent thematic issues listed above. In examining “The Lifted Veil” and “The Beast in the Jungle” against the backdrop of the intersections of queerness, gender, otherness, and the Victorian Gothic, I will demonstrate the

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<sup>17</sup> James’ estimations of Eliot’s “failures” will be discussed explicitly later in this thesis, as will critical estimation of James’ “failures” to overcome/outperform Eliot.

unique attitudes of English culture in the 1850s and the early 1900s (as understood by the authors). In combining these two stories in such a novel fashion, I endeavour to open new research avenues and to engender a deeper understanding of the stories, the authors, and the historical/cultural specificities facing them.

## CHAPTER I

To begin his first published review of Eliot, James writes, “Better, perhaps, than any other of George Eliot’s novels does *Felix Holt* illustrate her closely wedded talent and foibles” (*Literary Criticism*, 907).<sup>18</sup> This inseparability of praise and censure becomes the hallmark of James’ criticism of Eliot’s fiction. He immediately expands on the foibles of Eliot, judging her plots as “clumsily artificial,” “the conduct of her story slow,” “her style diffuse,” and her conclusion as “signally weak” (907).<sup>19</sup> The defects James finds in *Felix Holt*, though, are compensated by “the broad array of those rich accomplishments” also found in *Adam Bede* and *Romola* (907). James remarks on the “the firm and elaborate delineation of individual character,”<sup>20</sup> “that extensive human sympathy, that easy understanding of character at large, that familiarity with man, from which a novelist draws his real inspiration,” and Eliot’s influential morality which James “hardly [knows] how to qualify” (907, 908).<sup>21</sup> As is evident in the first few pages of this short review, James’ relationship to Eliot’s work vacillates persistently and resists simple conclusions. Instead, James chooses to flesh out the volatile and multitudinous nature extent between novel, author, reader, and critic.<sup>22</sup>

In this way, James’ review of *Felix Holt* becomes an easy-to-read roadmap to his critical engagement with the rest of Eliot’s work. Shortly after this review, James published

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<sup>18</sup> This review of *Felix Holt* appeared in *Nation* in August 1866. This review, as do the rest of the reviews discussed within this thesis, appear in *Literary Criticism* as edited by Leon Edel (1984).

<sup>19</sup> James finds these faults pervade not just *Felix Holt*, but *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, and *Romola* as well.

<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, James comments that Tito from *Romola* “is a better example” of Eliot’s “firm and elaborate delineation of individual character” than Felix (and Eliot’s other protagonists). In “The Novels of George Eliot,” James remarks that Tito “alone is a scholar” among the principal figures of Eliot’s novels (913). James perhaps sees Tito as the most successful delineation of individual character because he is not of the “common people” (913).

<sup>21</sup> Eliot’s morality “is not bold nor passionate, nor aggressive, nor uncompromising – it is constant, genial, and discreet. It is apparently the fruit of a great deal of culture, experience, and resignation” (908).

<sup>22</sup> James appeals to his readers as both Eliot’s critic and enthusiast: “When you re-read coldly and critically a book which in former years you have read warmly and carelessly, you are surprised to see how it changes its proportions. It falls away in those parts which have been pre-eminent in your memory, and it increases in the small portions” (922).

“The Novels of George Eliot” in the October issue of *Atlantic Monthly*. In this piece, James attempts to “seek out some key to [Eliot’s] method, some utterance of [her] literary convictions, some indication of [her] ruling theory” (912). James offers a slippery conclusion about Eliot’s convictions and theories. He comes to find his strongest impression of Eliot, that she “is in morals and aesthetics essentially a conservative,” but plays on the word “conclusion” at the end of the piece, writing,

I know few things more irritating in a literary way than each of [Eliot’s] final chapters, - for even in *The Mill on the Floss* there is a fatal “Conclusion.” Both as an artist and a thinker, in other words, [Eliot] is an optimist; and although a conservative is not necessarily an optimist, I think an optimist pretty likely to be conservative. (933).

By focusing our attention on the word “conclusion,” James accomplishes certain goals.<sup>23</sup> First, he mocks the conservative and unimaginative title of the concluding chapter “Conclusion.” Secondly, James judges the concluding chapter of *The Mill on the Floss* as unsatisfactory – a chapter inserted unsuccessfully into the work that undermines the organic wholeness of the novel. This conclusion also demonstrates, for James, a difficulty in Eliot’s writing. Though he does not condemn Eliot as either conservative or optimist, he argues that an optimistic author will inevitably rely on conservative values *in relation to the possibilities of fiction*. That is, by introducing a giant flood that kills both Maggie and Tom, Eliot conservatively reunites the estranged brother and sister back into an eternal bond of love and family. Here, James finds Eliot’s optimism – that love and family *are* eternal bonds – as

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<sup>23</sup> Fatal here refers both to the deaths of Maggie and Tom Tulliver in the great deluge that ends *The Mill on the Floss* and to the effect this scene has on the quality of the book as a whole. The ending of *The Mill on the Floss* essentially ‘kills’ the novel, undermining the success of the whole piece.

effectively conservative and as formally limiting because they reify or reaffirm prescriptive social values. Essentially, James applauds Eliot's work until the disruptive concluding paragraphs, creating a critical dichotomy that permeates many of his reviews.

James begins his review of *Middlemarch* in much the same fashion as the two previously discussed pieces. "*Middlemarch*," James writes, "is at once one of the strongest and one of the weakest of English novels" (958).<sup>24</sup> Accusing *Middlemarch* of becoming a "mere chain of episodes, broken into accidental lengths and unconscious of the influence of a plan," James teases his readers with the potentiality of *Middlemarch* rising to the rank of "the first of English novels" although he regrettably claims it to be "a treasure-house of details, but... an indifferent whole" (958). The pleasure of finding the first true English novel "has still to hover between prospect and retrospect" for James.<sup>25</sup> By clearing out a space of hallowed ground still untenanted, James creates for himself both a void to fill and a goal to attain.<sup>26</sup>

Eliot's final novel *Daniel Deronda*, too, fails to secure its place as "the first true English novel." In a very brief review published during the serialization of *Daniel Deronda*, James applauds the work, stating, "We know of none other at the present time that is at all comparable to it" and delights in the "pleasure in the prospect of the intellectual luxury of taking up, month after month, the little clear-paged volumes of *Daniel Deronda*" (973). Lat-

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<sup>24</sup> James similarly comments on Eliot's personal incongruities in *Middlemarch*. Just as her other novels present her as both an optimist and a conservative, she has, in *Middlemarch*, "commissioned herself to be real, her native tendency being that of an idealist" (965). Though this results in a "very fertilizing mixture," James still seems to be drawing his readers' attention to a dissonance in Eliot's fiction.

<sup>25</sup> Towards the end of this review, James takes an interesting position on *Middlemarch*, further arguing against *Middlemarch*'s claim as a *true* English novel. James writes, "English readers may fancy they enjoy the 'atmosphere' of *Middlemarch*; but we maintain that to relish its inner essence we must – for reasons too numerous to detail – *be an American*" (965, emphasis mine).

<sup>26</sup> In *The Theoretical Dimensions of Henry James* (1984), John Carlos Rowe dissects how James deals with the American and Victorian influences of Hawthorne and Trollope. Rowe believes the anxiety of these influences stem from "James' 'Americanness' as a peculiar functionality of his own willful desire to become an international modernist" and, in fact, James' "willful rejection of Trollope" (58, 59).

er that same year, in a new review *Atlantic Monthly*, James published a three-character dialogue exploring the merits and shortcomings of the novel in “Daniel Deronda: A Conversation.”<sup>27</sup> The dialogue follows a relatively straightforward diagram: Theodora and Pulcharia – the two female characters – disagree quite often on many of the book’s qualities, while Constantius, almost certainly James himself,<sup>28</sup> offers a “middle ground” between the opinions of the two female characters.<sup>29</sup>

During an argument between Theodora and Pulcharia over the picture of Deronda presented in the novel, Constantius responds in the same way which James approached Eliot’s other novels as evidenced earlier in this chapter. Constantius states,

I think you are both in a measure right; there is a distinction to be drawn. There are in *Daniel Deronda* the figures based upon observation and the figures based upon invention. This distinction, I know, is rather a rough one. There are no figures in any novel that are pure observation, and none that are pure invention. But either element may preponderate, and in those cases in which invention has preponderated George Eliot seems to me to have achieved at the best but so many brilliant failures. (978)

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<sup>27</sup> The first review was published in *Nation* in February 1876. “Daniel Deronda: A Conversation” was published in December of the same year after serialization of the novel finished.

<sup>28</sup> There are many clues that point towards Constantius as representing James in the text. The character has written one novel; has “an immense opinion of *Middlemarch*; and proclaims, “I even enjoy her poetry... In whatever she writes I enjoy her intelligence; it has space and air, like a fine landscape” (979). By this time James had published *Roderick Hudson* a year earlier and published lengthy reviews of Eliot’s foray into verse.

<sup>29</sup> Daugherty finds James “[dramatizing] his own male superiority even as he [expresses] his ambivalence” within such a format (157). Continuing, Daugherty notes, “He deals in superlatives that are nearly contradictory: he calls *Deronda* ‘the weakest of Eliot’s books’ yet pronounces Gwendolen’s history ‘the most *intelligent* thing in all of George Eliot’s writing” (157). In my opinion, as I have argued previously in this chapter, James is intentionally contradictory – using such dissonant superlatives to resist simple conclusions.

The term “brilliant failures” could just as easily apply to James’ critique of *Middlemarch* or *Romola* or *Felix Holt*: it praises and it censures all at once, applauding its measured success while quick to denote its shortcomings. It also splits the difference – between Theodora’s insistence on the beautiful descriptions of Deronda’s life and Pulcheria’s assertion that “a picture is not a person” (978). By claiming both Theodora and Pulcheria “are both in a measure right,” James critiques the reality set forth in *Daniel Deronda* by calling into question the relationship between the incidents and the characters in the novel. This dissonance between incidence and character, which James also finds in “The Lifted Veil,” disrupts the wholeness of the novel. This disruption, in James’ estimation, probably occurs due to Eliot’s inability to effectively execute the character of Deronda in a non-prescriptive fashion. Specifically, the character Eliot invents in *Deronda* is not imbued with an impression of life James so highly values. By deeming Eliot’s figures of invention as “brilliant failures,” James admires Eliot’s intelligence in creating these characters, while also regretting their lack of observed reality.<sup>30</sup> This passage is emblematic of James’ tendency to offer Eliot high acclaim tempered with measured critique. The rest of “Daniel Deronda: A Conversation” enacts this same tendency. James’ characters compare Eliot to other authors highly revered by James such as George Sand, Balzac, and Turgeneff, only to equivocally pronounce Eliot as their superior.

Interestingly, though perhaps unsurprisingly at this point in this chapter, James’ critical tendencies persist even when he is reviewing her published verse. In 1868, James published two reviews of Eliot’s oft-unread poem “The Spanish Gypsy” for *Nation* (July) and *North American Review* (October). Enchanted with the ability to review a *new publica-*

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<sup>30</sup> By “observed reality,” I do not mean observable reality of the character itself but rather the character’s reality as *dependent* upon its observation of real-life people.



tion of Eliot (his first chance to do so since *Felix Holt* in 1866), James devotes several pages to “The Spanish Gypsy” in both reviews.<sup>31</sup> James’ enjoyment of and interest in Eliot’s verse seems to be just as personal as with prose - especially in the *North American Review* essay - yet still tinged with subtle critical reproach. James compliments Eliot’s “gentle humour” and wondrous “descriptive powers” but stops well short of agreeing to any Shakespearian sentiment, admitting he “never thought [Eliot] a great dramatist, or even a particularly dramatic writer” (945). Even when praising Eliot in this essay, James checks himself, asserting, “The richness of the author’s style in her novels gives but an inadequate idea of the splendid generosity of diction displayed in the poem” (943). Eliot’s fiction, here described as in some way “inadequate,” lacks a quality that her poetry possesses. Though certainly a very laudatory comment, it appears as a subtle barb aimed at qualities James finds lacking or insufficient in her novels. Willing to compliment her poetic abilities, James still finds space in his review to criticize Eliot’s prosaic shortcomings. Although, he concludes, inevitably, that the poem reveals numerous deficiencies, James displays great excitement over Eliot’s foray into poetry.

Such enthusiasm permeates the pages of his review of *The Legend of Jubal and Other Poems* six years later. Interestingly, James again calls upon Shakespeare (one assumes as an answer to more bombastic reviews of Eliot’s verse) while also referencing Homer and Milton. “George Eliot,” affirms James, “is neither Homer nor Shakespeare nor Milton; but her work, like theirs, is a massive achievement, *divided into a supremely good and a less good*” (966 emphasis mine). Though the poems of this collection, for James, fall into the latter cat-

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<sup>31</sup> Of course, *Middlemarch* was published in 1869, so his 1873 review came four years after. The first review of *Daniel Deronda* was published while the novel was in serialization (1876). The next review, “Daniel Deronda: A Conversation” arrived in 1878.

egory, “they are an unmistakable manifestation” of Eliot’s authorial genius (967). Deemed “interesting failures,” the poems in this collection fail to deter James’ personal investment in Eliot (967).

James extends the same qualifier to his praise of “Brother Jacob” and “The Lifted Veil” in an April 1878 review in *Nation*, saying the “extremely different” yet “interesting” stories will cause readers to “doubtless wonder why the author has not oftener attempted to express herself within the limits of that form of fiction the French call the *nouvelle*” (993).<sup>32</sup> This comment, similar to many of James’ comments on Eliot, hints at a deficiency in Eliot’s prose while offering congratulatory remarks. James is calling into question Eliot’s tendency towards wordiness and pontification in her novels while offering the form of the *nouvelle* as a literary respite for both the author Eliot and the readers of her fiction. He concludes the scant review with the same sentiment, claiming “Brother Jacob” and “The Lifted Veil” both “interesting *jeux d’esprit* of a mind that is not often – perhaps not often enough – found at play” (994). James’ parenthetical “perhaps not often enough” more than likely refers to the tone of the two stories – the dark Gothicism of “The Lifted Veil” and the light-hearted and comedic “Brother Jacob.” In claiming Eliot’s mind is too often not “found at play,” James seems to be prefacing his own discussion of the role of the author’s mind in fiction. If life makes fleeting – or decaying – impressions upon the author, these impressions must then be reconciled with the imagination of the author. Therefore, James critiques Eliot’s imaginative paucity. Her imagination, which must work towards drawing a story out of the impressions made upon it, is more often, in James’ estimation, deficient in its ability to discover a wide range of narrative possibilities. James reviews these two sto-

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<sup>32</sup> This sentiment seems to echo James’ major complaint of *Middlemarch*: “Its diffuseness... makes it too copious a dose of pure fiction” (965). It also seems to respond to Eliot’s “loss of simplicity” in her prose (965).

ries “in the absence of anything new from George Eliot’s hand” (992).<sup>33</sup> Fortunately, this intermission in Eliot’s publishing allowed James to explore these under-discussed short pieces from Eliot. Though he judges “The Lifted Veil” “less successful” than the “excellent” “Brother Jacob,” the story’s subject matter only falters under “a want of connection between the clairvoyance of [Latimer] and the incidents” James describes in brief detail (993, 994). “Each of these things is very wonderful, states James, “but in conjunction they are rather violent” (994). This seems to be the same violence, or tension, that permeates James’ criticism of the rest of Eliot’s work. Just as Eliot is at once both a conservative and an optimist – or just as *Middlemarch* is both English and American – “The Lifted Veil” holds a marked dissonance. If, as Freadman argues, James used Eliot to explore “psychological, philosophical, and aesthetic problems,” it stands to reason that this perceived dissonance or disharmony in Eliot’s fiction, like the goal of creating the first *true* English novel, was a fault in Eliot James looked both to avoid and to correct (2).

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<sup>33</sup> Eliot was only two years from her death at this time, and *Daniel Deronda* marked the final piece of prose she wrote.

## CHAPTER 2

Though Henry James wrote “The Art of Fiction” as a direct response to Walter Besant’s essay of the same name in 1884, he more broadly responds to the “comfortable, good-humoured feeling abroad that a novel is a novel, as a pudding is a pudding, and that our only business with it could be to swallow it” during the period of Dickens, Thackeray, and Trollope (427).<sup>34</sup> James intends to introduce a theoretical modality to the discussion of the purport and scope of the novel, and by destabilizing its reductive relationship to itself, he allows for a larger and less redundant purview of the novel. Similarly, by implying that the novel is *not* merely a bland pudding serviceable only as a passive object to be ingested, James animates the novel and offers it a deeper and more complicated role. When James initially defines the role of the novel, he does so in a purposefully open-ended fashion that resists restriction. He declares, “The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life” (428). In its sincere attempt to represent life, the novel “must demand that it be perfectly free” and exercise a non-apologetic freedom that offers a “personal” and “direct impression of life” (432). Importantly, James creates a relationship in which a novel represents life, exercises freedom, and is/offers a direct impression. James argues that a novel *is* each of these actions, while also establishing each action as analogous to each other action. As James sees it, “The advantage, the luxury, as well as the torment and responsibility of the novelist, is that there is no limit to what he may attempt as an executant – no limit to his possible experiments, efforts, discoveries, successes” (432). The possibilities of the novel, then, are limitless. Though James steadfastly wants to avoid prescriptive definition of the novel, he must explore exactly how an artist creates a novel. In a

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<sup>34</sup> *The Portable Henry James*, Penguin (2004).

similar yet more diffuse fashion, George Eliot approached her theory of fiction to establish what fiction must do to succeed.<sup>35</sup> Essentially, both artists create a value system by which they judge and write fiction. These value systems also inform our readings of their fiction. By exploring each author's theory/theories on fiction, specifically each author's conception of the role of the author, the novel's relationship to reality, and the legitimacy of a novel's moral purpose, I will effectively demonstrate the aesthetic qualities that James and Eliot value. This will not only shed light on James' reviews of Eliot discussed in the previous chapter but will also illuminate how Henry James' "The Beast in the Jungle" relates to George Eliot's "The Lifted Veil."

By implicating Dickens, Thackeray, and Trollope as complicit with the age of the novel during which a novel was merely an easily digestible, inoffensive pudding, James not only critiques the novels written by these esteemed authors but begins to shape his theory on the role of the author in creating fiction. James, towards the end of "The Art of Fiction," summarily states, "The deepest quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of the producer" (446). Further, he writes, "No good novel will ever proceed from a superficial mind" (446). Bluntly, James believes good fiction fundamentally depends upon a profundity of mind. Eliot values this same level of profundity. In "How to Avoid Disappointment," one of five short pieces that make up Eliot's first published collection "Poetry and Prose, From the Notebook of an Eccentric,"<sup>36</sup> the 'narrator'<sup>37</sup> opines, when looking up-

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<sup>35</sup> I say diffuse, because Eliot never published a concise article on fiction such as James' "The Art of Fiction." Eliot approached her theory on fiction throughout her non-fiction essays and reviews. James, similarly, did not only confine his theory to solely "The Art of Fiction." Due to the constraints of this chapter, I will only consider "The Art of Fiction" as it relates to just a few of Eliot's nonfiction publications.

<sup>36</sup> Pinney (1963) notes, however, that a poem entitled "Farewell" (1840) does, in fact, pre-date this collection. "Prose and Poetry," which features no comments directly pertaining to poetry, was published between 1846 and 1847.

on the works of David Wilkie, that the artist possesses “a kind of purpose which makes life resemble a work of art in its isolated majesty or loveliness” (18). Eliot directly contrasts this higher purpose with the “purpose” of the wealthy man to attain riches and respectability, and the man of “public spirit” “who has devoted his life to some pet project, which is to be the grand catholicon for all the diseases of society” (18).<sup>38</sup> It is higher, because, as Eliot writes, this purpose drives the artist “to live for the good, the true, the beautiful, which outlive every generation, and are all-pervading as the light which vibrates from the remotest nebula to our own sun” (18-19). Though this conception of the artist in young Eliot’s mind may seem a bit romanticized, it clearly demonstrates a similar disposition towards the necessity of a strong, fertile mind for the artist that James more explicitly applauds in “The Art of Fiction.”

James’ artist possesses something very similar to Eliot’s. Though Eliot defines her artist as possessing a “purpose” to render life as artwork (and, subsequently, art as life), James’ artist “will not write a good novel unless [he possesses] the sense of reality” (434). Though James admits that “it will be difficult to give... a recipe for calling that sense into being,” he quite obviously values it and finds it indispensable. More importantly, this “sense of reality” relates directly to the “immense sensibility” of limitless experience (434). This immense sensibility, too, ties into the quality of the artist. James writes of experience, “It is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative – much more when it happens to be that of a man of genius – it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts

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<sup>37</sup> I am hesitant to define the ‘narrator’ of this piece as Eliot or as a character explicitly separate from Eliot as the writing style is too ambiguous to decide.

<sup>38</sup> *Essays of George Eliot*, Routledge (1963).

the very pulses of the air into revelations" (434).<sup>39</sup> Thus, this man of genius, who possesses an imaginative mind, turns experience into fiction through the writing process. To demonstrate how imagination functions as the crucible between experience and the act of writing that, according to Ohi (2012), resists mimesis, James relates the story of an English novelist who found success in writing about French Protestant youth (435). James writes, "The glimpse [of the youth sitting around a pastor's table] made a picture; it lasted only a moment, but that moment was experience. She had got her direct personal impression, and she turned out her type" (435).<sup>40</sup> That moment, which equals experience and impresses upon the mind of the author, only temporarily exists. Because it only lasts briefly, the author *must* combine this impressed image with her knowledge of youth and Protestantism to create a "concrete image" and to "[produce] a reality" (435).<sup>41</sup> The concrete image, then, is *not* the image of the youths sitting around the pastor's table, but rather it is the *result* of the image of the youths and the keen knowledge of the author. The produced reality, too, is a result.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> This passage marks for Ohi (2012) an integral juncture in understanding James. Ohi writes, "By making experience the very atmosphere of the mind, [James] interrupts the model of registration that would make writing from experience a mimetic process. Experience is the atmosphere of the mind, not the events that that atmosphere might lead the mind to register. Experience thus resists objectification; it is not an object because the mind cannot objectify its own experience" (6). Writing from experience is not mimetic, because the very imagination of the author – the crucible of the author – interacts with these experiences and with the author's perception of reality, to produce fiction.

<sup>40</sup> Though not within the scope of this essay, it is interesting to note that James' assessment of the fleeting temporality of the momentary glimpse directly recalls a Hobbesian sense of decaying sensory impressions upon the mind. "If experience consists of impressions," James writes, "it may be said that impressions *are* experience, just as... they are the very air we breathe" (435). This metaphor recalls Hobbes' discussion of the "Spirit of God" being a Biblical metaphor representing breath or the breath of life (*Leviathan* 331-343).

<sup>41</sup> James, of course, makes sure to say "a reality" and not just "reality." This works to also undermine the notion that artistic realism is merely a mimetic duplication of a collectively agreed upon "reality." This reality – a truthful, honest, real one – exists along with other truthful, honest realities. It is not categorically *more* important, but it is equally as important and truthful.

<sup>42</sup> Reality, as James defines it, is "solidity of specification" (435).

Reality, for James, is contingent upon the interaction between the acute experience of the author and the breadth of knowledge the author possesses. To Eliot, experience and knowledge work together to create a sense of reality in fiction, as well.<sup>43</sup> In "The Natural History of German Life," Eliot examines the intersection of imagination and experience through a brief exploration of the psychology of the image in both the abstract and the collective, or "what may be called the picture-writing of the mind, which it carries on concurrently with the more subtle symbolism of language" (267). Eliot looks at the associations with the term "railway" in two minds – one familiar and one unfamiliar with the term. The word "will probably call up, in the mind of a man who is not highly locomotive, the image of either a 'Bradshaw,' or of the station with which he is most familiar, or an indefinite length of tram-road" (267). The mind of this man will identify with the railroad those images most readily available to him through his own experiences. The man with more railway experience, however, "would include all the essential facts in the existence and relations of the thing" (267). The unfamiliar man looks to his scant experience but lacks a critical/essential understanding of the word's meaning and actuality. The familiar man, on the other hand, understands the word on a higher conceptual level that offers to him a wider range of images, associations, and knowledge. Eliot admits the possibility of "the first-mentioned personage to entertain very expanded views as to the multiplication of railways in the abstract, and their ultimate function in civilization," but concludes that this man of "wide

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<sup>43</sup> In fact, Eliot draws a similar portrait of James' man of genius in "The Progress of Intellect," a review of Robert William Mackay's double volume study of the same name. Though Eliot specifically praises Mackay, the portrait presented certainly lends itself to a broader intimation of Eliot's conception of the mind needed to produce reality from a litany of impressions and a storehouse of knowledge. She writes, "Now and then, however, we meet with a nature which combines the faculty for amassing minute erudition with the largeness of view necessary to give it a practical bearing... a nature like some mighty river, which... gathers mineral and earthy treasures only more effectually to enrich and fertilize the cultivated valleys and busy cities which form the habitation of man" (29).



views and narrow observation” would not be fit to build a railway or manage its affairs (267, 268).<sup>44</sup>

Eliot uses the metaphor of the locomotive gentleman versus the non-locomotive gentleman to illustrate her larger concern with the treatment of the English working classes by those incapable of truthfully “representing the complex facts summed up in the collective term” of “‘the people,’ ‘the masses,’ ‘the proletariat,’ [or] ‘the peasantry’ (268). Eliot bemoans the “cockney sentimentality” of much English art involved in depicting the English peasantry because it relies on unsubstantiated and incorrect presumed definitions of its very subjects. Eliot must destabilize and re-define these terms.<sup>45</sup> These terms, as Eliot argues, conjure up images of joyous, idyllic ploughmen and shepherds; rosy and merry children; and buxom matrons (269). These images are, for Eliot, idealistic and not realistic. The author fails to produce a reality from these images because the author lacks a fundamental knowledge of the realities of the images themselves. More specifically, the author lacks any experience with the people these images purportedly portray. This lack of experience results in a superficiality of the mind, something that James claims will never result in a good novel. This same superficiality, for Eliot, hinders the creation of a viable reality, as well.

More dangerously for Eliot, these images also supplement actual morality. “The conventional countryman of the stage,” writes Eliot, “represents the still lingering mistake, that an unintelligible dialect is a guarantee for ingenuousness, and that slouching shoulders in-

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<sup>44</sup> This passage might appear to be at odds with James’ estimation that “the young lady living in a village has only to be a damsel upon whom nothing is lost to make it quite unfair... to declare to her that she shall have nothing to say about the military” (434-435). However, I do not believe Eliot is denying the faculty of writing from anyone lacking complete expertise in his/her field. Rather, I believe Eliot, more than anything, is seeking to correct the perceived injustice perpetrated against the lower classes in English fiction. That is, unlike James’ keen damsel, Eliot’s artists that obscure the reality of English peasantry are not those “upon whom nothing is lost.”

<sup>45</sup> James, as demonstrated earlier, approaches the “novel” in the same way. Just as James destabilizes the novel/pudding analogy, Eliot disrupts the accepted cultural registers of such terms as “peasants” or “masses.”

dicating an upright disposition" (269-270). Morality, for Eliot, is not an inherent trait couched within a falsely prescribed image. Further, adherence to such limiting and reductive images would be artistically immoral, as they would result in art that failed in the "awakening of social sympathies" (271). Sympathy and morality are, for Eliot, nearly synonymous. In a letter to Charles Bray, Eliot famously wrote, "If art does not enlarge men's sympathies, it does nothing morally" (*III* 43). Thus, for Eliot, the novel exists, in its purest form, to engender and foster sympathy.

It is here that James diverges from Eliot's theory most critically and importantly. "The Art of Fiction" resists absolutely any sense of a moral imperative. James takes to task Besant's notion of the novel's "conscious moral purpose," arguing the novel, instead, possesses "a diffidence" (446). For James, the novel's diffidence – its timidity and reservation – actually stems from its proposed moral sentiment. James re-defines Besant's conception of the novel's moral purpose as derived from the reticence to discuss "certain things" "before young people" (446). Morality, as Besant sees it, thus becomes oppressively prescriptive in James' theory of fiction. Besant's conscious moral purpose, which James finds naïve and shy, imposes upon the novel too much to allow for the freedom it must necessarily possess to exist. Within this discussion, James similarly dismisses Eliot's own conception of the novel's conscious moral purpose as enlarged social sympathy. James cleverly saves this discussion for the end of "The Art of Fiction" so as to effectively eliminate it from discussion. The novel, like James' essay, has no room for moral prescription. James cannot offer any solution or response to Besant's conscious moral purpose besides a total elimination of the concept. James' dismissal of Besant's conscious moral purpose is a steadfast condemnation of the novel's explicit and "negative" Victorian morality.

James' effort to destabilize and re-open the sense of the novel's morality does, in fact, resemble Eliot's, but his resistance to *re-define* this moral purpose reifies the freedom he so expressly values throughout "The Art of Fiction." By focusing on the necessary freedom of the novelist and the novel, James refuses both a prescribed and presumed moral purpose and pre-determined forms of the novel. James writes, "I should remind [the youthful aspirant] first of the *magnificence of the form* that is open to him, which offers to sight so few restrictions and such innumerable opportunities" (446 emphasis mine). James must resist any formalization of the novel's form, because to limit the freedom of its form is to press the novel back into the nineteenth-century. To rescue, so to speak, the novel from nineteenth century conventions, James instead focuses on a novel's style. That is, James shifts focus onto the choices the author makes to explore and express the direct impressions of life that help shape a novel's reality. James argues, "The tracing of a line to be followed, of a tone to be taken, of a form to be filled out, is a limitation of that freedom [to feel and say] and a suppression of the very thing that we are most curious about" (432). James' curiosity, then, is the *execution* of the impression of life felt by the author. James' sense of execution revolves strictly around the organic wholeness of any given novel. "A novel is a living thing," writes James, "all one and continuous, like any other organism, and in proportion as it lives will it be found, I think, that in each of the parts there is something of each of the other parts" (433). Though there are no formalized rules for writing a novel, it must achieve an organic wholeness dependent upon its execution of character and incident. If character and incident are, in fact, extensions of each other, and further, extensions of the quality of the artist's mind, their inseparability, as executed through the author's style, be-

comes paramount to the novel's organic wholeness.<sup>46</sup> As demonstrated in the previous chapter, James often criticizes the violence that marks the multiple parts of Eliot's fiction that fail to work together to produce an organic whole. James also often bemoans the endings of Eliot's novels (e.g. Hetty's fate in *Adam Bede* and the flood ending of *The Mill on the Floss*). James, as he resists Besant's prescriptive moral purpose, also resists conventional endings. These conventional endings effectively reify a conservative morality. By banishing Hetty and killing Maggie and Tom Tulliver, Eliot – in James' estimation – refuses to explore the psychological and social possibilities executing Hetty and allowing Maggie and Tom to live estranged from one another. Thus, the conventionality of the ending derives itself from the conventionality of the moral prescription. These conclusion introduce into stories, and thus reaffirm, an *already agreed upon* moral construct. He writes, "The 'ending' of a novel is, for many persons, like that of a good dinner, a course of dessert and ices" (431). In his concluding remarks of "The Art of Fiction," James tells the young novelist, "If you must indulge in conclusions, let them have the taste of a wide knowledge" (447). In both of these comments, James reverts back to a metaphor of the novel as a digestible foodstuff. Implicit in his final comment, the "taste of a wide knowledge" would certainly be bitter for those customarily expecting that of desserts and ices. In these comments, then, James condemns the conventions by which authors in the nineteenth century conclude their fiction. If these conclusions lack the taste of wide knowledge – that is, they reify prescriptive social morality – they often fail to either represent the author's expressed impression of life or force upon the novel a disruptive, pre-fixed conclusion. In James' estimation, then, Eliot often forces upon her fiction disharmonious conclusions that rupture any sense of organic wholeness.

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<sup>46</sup> "What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character? What is either a picture or a novel that is *not* of character? What else do we seek in it and find in it?" (437)

By not exploring wider possibilities, such as letting Hetty be executed and not banished or with the grand admission of Bertha Latimer's great secret by the revived Mrs. Archer, Eliot, in fact, writes into *Adam Bede* and "The Lifted Veil" conclusions too conventionally prescribed to lend to either story's organic wholeness.

### CHAPTER III

When discussing the moral diffidence of the English (and American) novel in “The Art of Fiction,” James remarks on the role of knowledge or ‘facticity’ in fiction. He writes, “There is a traditional difference between that which people know and that which they agree to admit they know, that which they see and that which speak of, that which they feel to be apart of life and that which they allow to enter into literature” (444). For James, these differences exist due to the stilted morality of Victorian authors. Authors make omissions due to prescriptive limitations that undermine the very meaning and efficacy of fiction.<sup>47</sup> In this passage, James also expresses his critical view on how people *in general* approach knowledge. What people know and what they collectively admit or agree to know are, for James, two entirely different areas. Similarly, what a person sees or experiences does not directly correlate to that which a person publicly discloses. Knowledge, then, becomes a constructed system with its own rules and regulations. Knowledge depends on producers and receivers, and a set of moral or ethical codes that inform the power relationship between producers and receivers, and, thus, the creation of knowledge (or facticity or knowability) relies on the interaction between its producers and receivers.

Eliot’s “The Lifted Veil” and James’ “The Beast in the Jungle” both explore knowledge as a constructed system through characters that seek knowledge. Latimer and John Marcher, the two protagonists of their respective stories, interact with knowledge in distinct yet ultimately similar ways. Latimer, a self-diagnosed clairvoyant with previsionary abilities, both sees future events before they (allegedly) happen and has the thoughts of others forced upon him. Marcher, on the other hand, drifts through life blindly, guided along by his

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<sup>47</sup> This passage seems to also condemn readership as complicit in what the author decides to include or exclude. That is, the reader informs the author and the author informs the reader cyclically.

friend May Bartram, towards a hoped-for discovery of the veiled secret of the great event to happen in his life. Marcher's blindness seemingly mocks Latimer's prescience, but both of these protagonists focus and obsess on finalistic moments of validation and verification. As Latimer begins his narrative in "The Lifted Veil," he wonders that, if he were to have not possessed such "an exceptional mental character," he "should for once have known whether the miseries of delusive expectation can outweigh the miseries of true prevision" (3).<sup>48</sup> Latimer, the clairvoyant, suffers through the miseries of knowing the thoughts of others and what the future will hold.<sup>49</sup> Marcher's story, consequently, is exactly the story of the miseries of delusive expectation. Marcher obsesses so singularly over the expectation of the looming beast, he effectively occludes the rest of life from consideration.

Latimer's mental powers and Marcher's obsession compel their stories forward, but they both rely on their relationships to create knowledge-based power dynamics. Bertha and May Bartram, the women protagonists of their respective stories, interact within these power dynamics with Latimer and Marcher to both produce and complicate knowledge and knowability. While Bertha remains as an unreadable wall to Latimer for much of "The Lifted Veil," May, in fact, produces almost all that is knowable in "The Beast in the Jungle" and provides for Marcher the foundation of his knowledge base.<sup>50</sup> The power dynamics of both the Latimer/Bertha and Marcher/May relationships shift throughout, resulting in an un-

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<sup>48</sup> Fundamentally, this passage would seem to offer James the impetus for creating a protagonist diametrically opposed to Latimer. "His one desire," James writes of Marcher, "remains of course to meet his fate, or at least to *divine it, to see it as intelligible*, to learn it, in a word" (x emphasis mine). Where Eliot explores the horrors of possessing such divinatory ability, James explores the horror of never knowing and never seeing. Marcher desperately hopes for such ability while Latimer suffers under its oppression.

<sup>49</sup> Later in this chapter, I will explore certain passages that undermine the possibility of Latimer's previsionary abilities.

<sup>50</sup> Goodheart (2003) and Tate (2012) both explore the large and necessary role May plays in "The Beast in the Jungle." While Goodheart reads May back into the story as a necessary (and not ancillary) participant in Marcher's life, Tate responds to Sedgwick's claim that May wishes to "dissolve" Marcher's closet by arguing that May "seeks the social protection of the closet herself" (19). For Tate, the queer possibilities of "The Beast in the Jungle" importantly include May just as they include Marcher.

dercurrent of gender role upheaval in both stories. These relationships, contingent upon the transaction of knowledge between the two characters, exist within unstable temporalities and spatialities. The transaction of knowledge between these couples is further distorted by the introduction of secondary or tertiary characters. Mrs. Archer, the maid hired by Bertha towards the end of "The Lifted Veil," remains on the margins of the story until her death and subsequent revivification. Eliot keeps this character hidden obscurely behind Latimer and Bertha for her brief time in the story, but her death and revivification unveil the story's most shocking admission. Similarly, Marcher comes across an unnamed stranger in the graveyard towards the end of "The Beast in the Jungle." The stranger, a fellow mourner, offers to Marcher a glimpse into the raw emotionality that his own life has utterly lacked. Both Mrs. Archer and this stranger interrupt the knowledge-transaction binarism of Latimer/Bertha and Marcher/May to further complicate how knowledge as power works in both stories.

Both Eliot and James confuse and destabilize their narratives (through different techniques) in order to further complicate not only the relationships of their main protagonists but also the relationship these characters have to knowledge and knowability. To most effectively explore the connectivity (and thus, the relationship between "The Lifted Veil" and "The Beast in the Jungle") between Latimer and Marcher (the two sensitive protagonists), I will also draw connections between their relationships with Bertha and May and how each narrative's setting further disrupts not only what can be known/is known but also what can be communicated/is communicated. Finally, I will discuss how Mrs. Archer and the graveyard stranger in "The Lifted Veil" and "The Beast in the Jungle," re-



spectively, further complicate knowability and communicability for the primarily binaristic power relationship between Latimer/Bertha and Marcher/May.

By James' own admission, Marcher – “another poor sensitive gentleman” – is “condemned to keep counting with the *unreasoned prevision* of some extraordinary fate” (ix emphasis mine).<sup>51</sup> “Unreasoned prevision” seems a re-worded valuation of “delusive expectation,” and this comment by James furthers the connection between Marcher and Latimer. Latimer and Marcher both live quite passively with a singular goal in mind – the final validation of their reasoned and/or unreasoned prevision. By obsessively looking towards a future event, Latimer and Marcher both eschew the normal passage of time, and the narratives of both “The Lifted Veil” and “The Beast in the Jungle” reflect such an attitude. Time, for Marcher, represents “an equal and indivisible law” to which he (and “his great vagueness”) is ultimately subject (261). The narrator of “The Beast in the Jungle” relates Marcher's attitude, “Since it was in Time that he was to have met his fate, so it was in Time that his fate was to have acted” (261). The issue arises, however, from how dislodged from Time Marcher (and May) seems to be.<sup>52</sup> Time, and, for that matter, space, are both immediately destabilized when Marcher and May meet at Weatherend. As they recount their initial meeting, Marcher proceeds to incorrectly identify each specific detail, while May must rejoin his comments with amendments and corrections. May changes every memory Marcher discloses: from Rome to Naples, seven years to ten, the Pemples to the Boyers, and the Pal-

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<sup>51</sup> James jocularly interjects, “My attested predilection for poor sensitive gentlemen almost embarrasses me as I march!” (ix). Auchard, in his brief introduction to “The Beast in the Jungle,” notes that this admissions “has been responsible for the fact that so much biographical criticism has been heaped upon this great tale” focusing on James' relationship with Constance Fenimore Woolfson (236).

<sup>52</sup> One of the differences between “The Lifted Veil” and “The Beast in the Jungle” is the perspective of the narrator. Eliot uses first-person for “The Lifted Veil,” allowing Latimer to dictate his life to the readers, while “The Beast in the Jungle” is told from the third person semi-omniscient. Aside from *The Impression of Theophrastus Such*, “The Lifted Veil” marks Eliot's only foray into first-person narration. This has stemmed a wealth of criticism claiming Latimer as a not-so-subtle representation of Eliot herself.

ace of Caesars to Pompeii (239). Their shared past becomes entirely dependent upon Marcher accepting May's version of the events (which he happily does), and thus May shapes and creates Marcher's knowledge of their past and his past. May continues to be the clock by which Marcher keeps time in "The Beast in the Jungle." As the years of their friendship pass uncounted, May's birthday serves as a reminder to Marcher that time, in fact, has passed. This birthday occurs during "a season of thick fog and general outward gloom," a description of both the spatial and temporal qualities surrounding the date (252).<sup>53</sup> Marcher himself seems unable to rationally process the passing of time or understand its effects on himself and May: "He had been struck one day, after an absence exceeding his usual measure, with her suddenly looking much older to him than he had ever thought of her being... She looked older because, inevitably, after so many years, she *was* old" (260). The narrator continues, "If she was old, or almost, John Marcher assuredly was" as well (261).<sup>54</sup> Thus, even on May's birthday – a specific marker in the passage of time – temporality remains unstable and unknowable. Further, May, as she did at Weatherend, produces for Marcher knowledge about himself. Marcher only realizes his own age *through* May. If, as stated earlier, Time represents Marcher's "equal and indivisible law," it becomes inextricably linked with May. May, then, becomes an equal and indivisible law for Marcher, the source of time, knowledge, and his very identity.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> During the conversation that takes place on May's birthday, May relates, "Our habit saves you, at least, don't you see? because it makes you, after all, for the vulgar, undistinguishable from other men" (252). Phipps (2013) explores this passage in depth.

<sup>54</sup> Marcher and May are around 30 and 35 at the onset of "The Beast in the Jungle," but even the narrator does not commit to their specific ages when relating this information.

<sup>55</sup> If Marcher's identity is contingent upon the knowledge he receives from May, she represents the agentic side of their power dynamic. She dictates time (defining their past meeting; Marcher's own aging processes), transmits to Marcher any and all pertinent knowledge, and essentially creates his very identity (since his own conception of identity relies so heavily on a future event). I will return to this later in the chapter.

Marcher (and the narrator) fails to produce a concrete conceptualization of Time in “The Beast in the Jungle,” while Latimer’s concretized version of Time in “The Lifted Veil” actually repeatedly undermines itself. Though Latimer breezes through spans of time in his narrative whimsically, he relies on some specificity to control his narrative. At the beginning of “The Lifted Veil,” Latimer portends, “Just a month from this day, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 1850, I shall be sitting in this chair, in this study, at ten o’clock at night, longing to die” (3). The narrative Latimer tells, then, inhabits one month while spanning across the whole of life. The specificity of Latimer – he counts down to the exact hour of his death – contradicts the formlessness of the narrative he tells of his life. Latimer takes liberties with the passage of time, never indicating exact dates or the ages of himself or his fellow characters. This creates a cognitive dissonance for the reader in which time is both exacted and nebulous. Similarly, though the narrative takes place in numerous European cities, Latimer grounds the entire narrative in the chair in the study from which he writes his poor tale, and in which he will inevitably die “at ten o’clock at night” (3). Immediately, then, we recognize the instability of Time (and space) in “The Lifted Veil” as it twists and turns in and out of the present and the past – between extravagant cities and personal drawing rooms – with always a prescient eye towards the final date.

Though destabilized in seemingly different ways, temporality in both “The Lifted Veil” and “The Beast in the Jungle” resists normalcy due to previsionary abilities (or the lack thereof). Due to Marcher’s obsession with his unrealized previsionary abilities, he must rely on May to keep time for him. His inability to see anything but the future event that will define his life obscures the proper passage of time in the narrative. Latimer’s realized previsionary abilities, on the other hand, result in a temporal disruption and spatial

displacement *inherent* to the very nature of the abilities themselves. That is, Latimer's previsions literally transport the narrative into an undefined future. When these previsions come to fruition, the narrative is transported back to the past moment of Latimer's prevision. These events, too, take place outside of the normal time and location of the narrative. They inhabit a cerebral locality, one that blends reality with dream in an unsettling fashion. The verifications of his previsions, however, also inhabit a distinctly bodily locality as well. After his initial prevision, Latimer asks, "Was this a dream – this wonderfully distinct vision... of a strange city, quite unfamiliar to my imagination?" (9). Latimer connects dream to vision to imagination, but he also implicitly connects a sickness of mind with a sickness of body. "A severe illness" ended his happier life in Geneva and directly precipitated his first prevision of Prague. Then, in Prague, Latimer tells his reader, "A trembling seized me, and I turned cold under the mid-day sun" when he finds the "small detail which [he] remembered with special intensity" (23). As Latimer's mind dislocates itself from a normal passage of time to relive the past moment of his dream/vision, his body undergoes the same distress.<sup>56</sup> This complicated scene, which draws the reader both to the actualization of an event in the present and back to a past event that looked towards the future, becomes *more* complicated due to the evidence Latimer presents his reader. "The patch of rainbow light on the pavement transmitted through a lamp in the shape of a star" that Latimer sees and uses to verify his vision is not present in his original previsionary experience. This leaves Latimer's readers now unsure of the connection between *this* Prague and the Prague

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<sup>56</sup> It is possible that this physical sickliness represents the cognitive dissonance associated with previsionary experiences. On the other hand, it remains justifiable to imagine that Latimer's physical illness *creates* his previsionary powers.

of Latimer's prevision. In this way, two Pragues emerge in the text, functionally destabilizing the locality of Latimer during each event.<sup>57</sup>

If prevision uproots Latimer and Marcher from temporality and spatiality, it also affects how they interact with Bertha and May respectively. As discussed above, May not only defines Time and knowledge for Marcher, but also inevitably creates his identity for him. Along with defining their past together and providing for him a sense of his own age, May first actualizes Marcher's secret and then embodies that very secret.<sup>58</sup> If "the definite point [of Marcher's life] was the inevitable spring of the creature," May acts out this springing beast towards the end of her life in angelic fashion (249). As Marcher stands next to "the chimney-piece, fireless and sparsely adorned," the Sphinx-like May "[hovers] before him" with "her sweet, cold eyes on him," literally raising from her chair to perform the great rise of Marcher's fate (265, 267). The clueless and baffled Marcher stares wondrously and wonderingly at May, incapable of seeing what May's performance means for him. When May admits to being "'too ill'" to *speak* what such a performance meant, "it sprang up sharp to [Marcher], and almost to his lips, the fear that she would die without giving him light" (268).<sup>59</sup> After Marcher asks May to explain what has transpired, she chillingly and conclusively answers, "'What *was* to'" (268).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> A similar transportative effect takes place during his prevision of Bertha while vacationing in Vienna.

<sup>58</sup> It will become apparent in this discussion that I do not mean that May embodies Marcher's secret in so much that she *is* the thing that Marcher is to experience, but rather, May replaces Marcher's ambiguous tiger with herself to further substantiate his identity (if his identity is also contingent upon the realization of his "fate").

<sup>59</sup> This quote seems critical to the story. The feeling springing up Marcher, much as the the beast was to; Marcher again being *incapable* of bringing knowledge into existence (cannot speak); and his freezing fear that the light (knowledge) May assumedly holds will never be transmitted to him.

<sup>60</sup> Though I fundamentally agree with the queer possibilities of the text of "The Beast in the Jungle," as first articulated by Sedgwick (1990) and brilliantly pushed further by scholars such as Ohi (2011, 2012), Lundbland (2009), Helmers (2011), and Moses (2011), I see it as more valuable to understand this passage as the culmination of the role May embodies throughout the story. Her performance essentially offers Marcher a semi-concretized fate, though it still lacks proper definition. Implicit within May's performance is a conces-

After May's death, Marcher believes she "had forbidden him, so far as he might, to know, and she had even in a sort denied the power in him to learn" (275). May's role in the power dynamic extent between herself and Marcher, then, results in an ultimate unknowability for Marcher. More specifically, her death deprives Marcher of his sole wellspring of knowledge in his life. His identity, then, returns to the abyssal state in which it existed prior to their meeting at Weatherend. From the time of this meeting until May's death, Marcher relied singularly on May to create and substantiate his identity. The power dynamic of Marcher and May's relationship represents a re-construction of the power dynamic extent between Latimer and Bertha. Latimer's clairvoyance cannot penetrate Bertha's mind, as she remains the only secret in Latimer's life. Thus, Bertha represents complete unknowability. Latimer seeks refuge in his ignorance of her thoughts. Essentially, then, Bertha, as unreadable, becomes the only person through which Latimer can de-possess himself of his previsionary and clairvoyant abilities (become normal).<sup>61</sup> This, however, becomes complicated, as Latimer does finally read the thoughts of Bertha *within* a previsionary moment. During Latimer's prevision of Bertha as his future wife, he sees her "with cruel eyes, with green jewels and green leaves on her white ball-dress," and hears her think, "'Madman, idiot! why don't you kill yourself, then?'" (19). This previsionary and clairvoyant episode, however, does not initially break the spell cast upon Latimer by Bertha's unknowability. "The fear of poison," writes Latimer, "is feeble against the sense of thirst" (20). This quote highlights another logical connection between these relationships. For Latimer, the quote

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sion to her unwillingness, or, perhaps more fruitful, her unknowingness, of what fate actually awaits Marcher. Since May, however, has shaped Marcher's identity throughout the story, this performance reflects her final efforts to offer him the identity for which he so desperately searches.

<sup>61</sup> May (as discussed by different scholarly camps) offers a similar normalizing effect for Marcher. May even realizes it, in the previously cited passage in which she discussed the saving grace of their shared habit.

means numerous things. First, it foreshadows the climactic end of the story when Mrs. Archer – revived from the dead – divulges Bertha’s intent to poison Latimer. Second, it metaphorically represents Latimer’s struggle with his mental abilities. Latimer’s thirst – both towards normalcy and towards the ultimate verification of his powers – outweighs both the knowledge he now possesses of Bertha’s true self and the horror of actually being a clairvoyant (even though Latimer is thoroughly obsessed with having his clairvoyance and previsions substantiated). For Marcher and May, this “sense of thirst” represents Marcher’s unceasing drive to meet his fate. May, then, represents “the fear of poison” because, though she attempts to imbue Marcher’s life with purpose, she seems an unsuitable fate for Marcher. This might explain his inability (or, perhaps, refusal) to accept May as the fate that awaits him.

Again, we arrive at a fundamental similarity between Latimer and Marcher. What does it mean that each character sustains himself on a sense of thirst? Both Bertha and May provide (in different ways) an effective conclusion to the lives led by Latimer and Marcher. However, what connects Latimer and Marcher most deeply, more so than their respective obsessions with prevision, is a shared sense of suspense. “Suspense,” remarks Latimer, is “the only form in which a fearful spirit knows the solace of hope” (22). Both Latimer and Marcher remain constantly afraid throughout their respective stories. Latimer’s fear derives itself from the substantiation or verification of his diseased mind. Marcher’s fear remains multifaceted. “I’m only afraid of ignorance now – I’m not afraid of knowledge,” he tells May shortly before she enacts the springing beast (265). Ultimately, as related by James’ in his preface to the story, Marcher fears being the man “to whom nothing whatever was to happen” (xi). Marcher, then, fears his own fate. The suspense in which

both Latimer and Marcher live, however, offers them hope. Once the suspense is broken, all hope is shattered. After May's death, Marcher finds himself lamenting – surprisingly – the end of his suspense: “It sounded too foolish and too flat; the difference for him in this particular, the extinction in his life of the element of suspense, was such in fact as to surprise him” (274). The narrator continues, “He could scarce have said what the effect [of the extinction of suspense] resembled; the abrupt cessation, the positive prohibition of music perhaps” (274). May's life imbued within Marcher not only a sense of purpose but a sense of suspense and, consequently, hope. Marcher's hope, then, dies with May. Latimer suspense ends, and, thus, so does his hope, when the hateful prevision of Bertha comes to fruition.<sup>62</sup>

As both Latimer and Marcher become hopeless (cease living in a state of suspense), their narratives simultaneously open up to unforeseen possibilities. Latimer, after the scene just narrated, remarks, “Things were in this state near the end of the seventh year. I had become entirely free from insight, from my abnormal cognizance of any other consciousness than my own” (36). The disappearance of Latimer's powers provokes from Bertha perhaps the most interesting (and least discussed) passage in the story. “I used to think you were a clairvoyant,” smirks Bertha, “and that was the reason *why you were so bitter against other clairvoyants*, wanting to keep your monopoly; but I see now you have become rather duller than the rest of the world” (36-37 emphasis mine). The hopeless Latimer pays these comments no mind, even though Bertha readily admits that she suspect-

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<sup>62</sup> Interestingly, both Latimer's scene with Bertha and May's death result in anticlimactic feelings for Latimer and Bertha. Marcher laments his inability to comprehend May as his fate as an “anticlimax” derived from sleepwalking through the supposed epiphany (275). Similarly, Latimer notes, “The apparently indifferent nature of [Bertha's] errand [to hire Mrs. Archer] seemed to make a ridiculous anticlimax to my prevision and my agitation” (34).



ed/knew about Latimer's abilities. The narrative, however, interrupts any sort of revelation with the re-introduction of Latimer's only friend Dr. Charles Meunier. Serendipitously, Meunier's visit coincides with Mrs. Archer's peritonitis attack, which sets in motion the story's infamous revivification scene.

The purport of this scene rests in how it relates to the theme of knowledge and knowability in "The Lifted Veil." After the "dark veil" falls completely over the dead Mrs. Archer, Dr. Meunier performs a blood transfusion in the hopes to resurrect Mrs. Archer to divulge the unspoken last words both Meunier and Latimer noticed. After the transfusion, Meunier brought Mrs. Archer's breathing back using artificial respiration. As Mrs. Archer's breathing returns, Bertha re-enters the room and meets the revived eyes of Mrs. Archer. This prompts from Mrs. Archer the admission of the story's greatest secret. Mrs. Archer points at Bertha and gasps, "You mean to poison your husband... the poison is in the black cabinet... I got it for you... you laughed at me, and told lies about me behind my back, to make me disgusting... because you were jealous... are you sorry... now?" (42).<sup>63</sup> The admission of this secret represents the potent nugget of knowledge in the whole of the story. Importantly, it is a relative stranger – relative to the reader – that produces such knowledge. By having this outside source produce such knowledge, Eliot upends the power dynamic between Bertha and Latimer that exists throughout "The Lifted Veil." It further complicates the relationship to knowledge and knowability. Meunier's experiment has blurred the unbreakable and unknowable barrier between life and death. The only information totally unknowable to a previsionary clairvoyant – that which takes place after death – becomes

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<sup>63</sup> There also exists no scholarship concerning Mrs. Archer's grave admission. There is a wealth of possibilities contained within the broken speech. Hidden within this speech is the only look into the relationship between Mrs. Archer and Bertha and the possibilities contained therein.

knowable and known. Mrs. Archer's secret undoes what the characters in "The Lifted Veil" know about the boundary between life and death.

It is here, at the boundary between life and death, where the conclusion of "The Beast in the Jungle" exists. Marcher, after his travels into the "depths of Asia," returns to May's grave as a "positive resource" (276, 277). "This garden of death," relates the narrator, "gave him the few square feet of earth on which he could still most live" (277). At this site, Marcher recounts the streams of the past "with such effect that he seemed to wander through the old years with his hand in the arm of a companion who was, in the most extraordinary manner, his other, younger self" (278). Marcher, feeling always watched by the eyes of his lost friend, here "settled to live – feeding only on the sense that he once *had* lived, and dependent on it not only for a support but for an identity" (278). May, even from in her grave, offers to Marcher what he so desperately needs: a sense of his former lived life and an identity.

The serenity of this scene, marked by its confluence with the rest of Marcher's story, is interrupted when Marcher comes face-to-face with a "fellow-mortal" in the cemetery (278). The face of the stranger "looked into Marcher's own, at the cemetery, with an expression like the cut of a blade" (278). In the stranger's face "nothing lived but the deep ravage of the features that he showed" (279). As the stranger showed Marcher these deep ravages, Marcher "was moved... by some impulse that was either a signal for sympathy or, more possibly, a challenge to another sorrow" (279). Thus, the stranger offers Marcher a previously untenable potentiality – an emotionality contingent upon the connection to another's suffering. As Marcher reels from this face-to-face, he realizes that "no passion had ever touched him," and that "he had seen *outside* his life, not learned it within" (280). Fur-

ther spiraling down, Marcher realizes the beast *had* sprung back in April, when May “had risen from her chair to stand before him and let him imaginably guess” (281). His fear justified and his fate achieved, Marcher realizes, “This horror of waking – *this* was knowledge, knowledge under the breath of which the very tears in his eyes seemed to freeze” (281). Marcher’s seemingly endless search for knowledge, similar to Latimer’s, culminates in a horrible awakening. Marcher, sickened by “what had been appointed and done” to his life, collapses onto May’s grave in a state of hallucination, swallowed by the “huge and hideous” beast (282).

Though the revivification scene offers the most climactic moment of the conclusion of “The Lifted Veil,” the story actually ends in the “present” with Latimer calmly awaiting the death previsions in the opening pages of his story. The elliptical conclusion occludes any firm sense of resolution, but it becomes clear that Latimer obsesses over the knowability of the afterlife and of death’s potentialities. In “The Lifted Veil,” death offers both the final validation of Latimer’s abilities (if he, in fact, dies with the ellipses) and the possibility of expunging your final sins. It becomes knowable, and thus disrupts the fundamental relationship to death humans possess. Death also provides a conduit for sympathy, something life never provides for Latimer. After the death of his brother, Latimer comments, “As I saw into the desolation of my father’s heart, I felt a movement of deep pity towards him, which was the beginning of a new affection – an affection that grew and strengthened” (28). Latimer’s empathetic feelings towards his father engender a newly found sympathy between the two characters.<sup>64</sup> Throughout “The Lifted Veil,” Latimer’s clairvoyance inhibits his ability to feel any sympathy towards fellow people. The intrusion

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<sup>64</sup> Albrecht (2011) explores how Eliot uses Latimer’s telepathy to trouble her ethical imperative of sympathy in “The Lifted Veil.”

of their petty thoughts onto his mind actually creates a sense of distaste and distrust of human beings. Further, since Latimer's condition keeps him fearful of divulging his secret to anyone, he must implore the reader to understand and sympathize with him. "Are you unable to give me your sympathy – you who read this?" asks Latimer (21). Implicit within the validation Latimer seeks through his own death is the validation of his prevision for his readers, thus resulting in a sympathetic connection he could not attain with his fellow mortals in his narrative due to his mental prowess.

The instability of sympathy in "The Lifted Veil," however, challenges the rest of Eliot's oeuvre. Though it is reified between Latimer and his father following his brother's death, the decisive moment is left up to the reader. Though James often accused Eliot (sometimes subtly and sometimes not-so-subtly) of moral proselytizing and ethical platitudes, his enjoyment of "The Lifted Veil" could certainly find its origins in Eliot's resistance to prescriptive morality in the story. James approaches prescriptive morality in the same fashion. To reiterate a quote cited above, Marcher "was moved... by some impulse that was either a signal for sympathy or, more possibly a challenge to another sorrow" (279). Within this face-to-face interaction between Marcher and the stranger, Marcher finds two distinct possibilities death and grief hold for the living. Though Marcher awakes to the knowledge he sought throughout his life, the awakening is horrible and results in bitterness, sickness, and cruelty. Though "The Lifted Veil" sees Eliot venturing away from her usual sense of sympathy as the ethical imperative, James brutally rips away from such a possibility, opting to explore the horror of seeing another's suffering and the anguish felt by a man whose life has been wasted. In his hallucinatory state, Marcher manifests Latimer's conception of the "stage of the poet's suffering, in which he feels the delicious pang of utterance, and makes

an image of his sorrows" (24). The image of Marcher's sorrows – "the Jungle of his life and... the lurking Beast" represent the Marcher realizing that "the escape would have been to love her; then, *then* he would have lived" (281). As Marcher attempts to take solace in his epiphany, the horror of his forgone life envelops him in an undefined blackness.

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